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Statement submitted by People's Decade of Human Rights Education, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2008/100.

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Statement

The development of human rights cities towards sustainable development

What is a human rights city? It a microcosm of a state where the entire populace and its institutions, a complex social, economic political entity, create a local steering committee whose members represent all concerns of the city, They join to learn about human rights as relevant to the wide spectrum of sustainable development. They generate learning programs and dialogue that lead to evaluating the short and long term development of their city, guided by the holistic human rights framework.

In the Human Rights City the community works to improve equality, non discrimination. They work to build a society that respects and helps women and men realize their human rights. In the neighborhoods they map violations vs. the realizations, designing plans for a creative, caring society.
These activities result in a viable process of critical thinking and systemic analysis that leads to equal and meaningful participation in the decisions that determine their lives as they construct a viable model for sustainable development. Plans include the eradication of poverty, unemployment, and inequitable social conditions. These activities are carried out by women and men of all ages and origins, minorities, migrants, disabled and indigenous people and more. They learn to live in trust and respect, to belong in dignity in community with others. The integration of social and economic development, include environmental conservation and protection.

Through the process of learning and dialogue people consciously internalized the holistic vision of human rights to overcome fear and want. Such a city provides safe places to all within its boarders, women and men alike. The process aims to assure human security, adequate food and nutrition, housing; education directed to the full development of the human being, healthcare; clean water and sanitation, and work at livable wages. Resources are shared with all citizens-- not as a gift, but as a realization of human right—as they join in developing a new political culture based on human rights, with integrity and social responsibility, each becoming a mentor and a monitor.

The premise that leads to developing human rights cities for people to achieve sustainable development is the wisdom imbedded in the comprehensive human rights framework. Since 1948, this framework has been carefully and inclusively articulated by individuals, groups and nations. They have recognized the profundity of humanity's hopes and expectations nourished by women, men, youth and children throughout human history. There is no other option but human rights for genuine sustainable development.

In summation it is important to note that beyond the creative work in the human rights cities, the holistic vision and practical mission of human rights, is hardly known to most people around the world. Responding to this need the General Assembly had approved resolution 62/171, introduced by Benin, for 2009 to be an International Year of Human Rights Leaning—this will enrich all efforts towards sustainable development worldwide.

There are now 20 human rights cities around the world being facilitated by PDHRE.